

WorkSafeMT
DRAFT 9-2-08
SAFETY & TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

Purpose:

The Labor Management Advisory Council (LMAC) on Workers' Compensation is committed to safer, healthier workplaces across Montana. To achieve this goal, the LMAC approved adoption of a State-Wide Safety Initiative to enhance employer competitiveness and to enhance employee safety by improving how safety is valued both in professional and private life. The need for the initiative is driven by Montana's high injury and illness rates relative to the rest of the nation and by the state's workers' compensation premium rates which are correspondingly high relative to the rest of the nation.

The LMAC is also committed to improving Montana's transitional employment system. To achieve this goal, the LMAC supported 60 Summits: Montana. The need for change is evident in that Montana's WC system keeps injured employees away from work longer than the national average, thereby hindering the employee's overall health and increasing the employee's lifetime economic hardship.

The vision, mission, guiding principles and proposed outcomes of the initiative are outlined below.

Vision:

A safety culture that ensures Montana workplaces are clean, healthy and safe, and free of occupational injuries, illnesses and fatalities. A transitional employment process that supports and values injured workers and minimizes the impact of an injury on a worker's health and lifetime economic wellbeing. Enhanced employer competitiveness through a healthy, productive workforce, reasonable, constant workers' compensation rates, and decreased associated indirect costs.

Mission:

To educate and provide consultation to employers and employees as to their rights to, and responsibilities for, creating the vision. To develop and implement a statewide initiative to create a safety culture that values the prevention of occupational injury, illness and death, through development and implementation of specific safety initiatives with consistent messages. To develop and implement a statewide initiative to create a transitional employment system that promotes the adoption of the American College of Occupational & Environmental Medicine (ACOEM) guideline entitled, "Preventing Needless Work Disability by Helping People Stay Employed". To positively impact two of the four primary cost drivers for Montana's workers' compensation premiums.

To send Montana workers home at the end of their day healthy and safe; to enhance employer competitiveness through a healthy, productive workforce; and to work toward reasonably constant workers' compensation rates and associated indirect costs relative to our peer states.

Guiding Principles:

- WorkSafeMT Foundation provides leadership and direction for changing Montana's safety culture and transitional employment process, and reports to the LMAC
- Develop a long-term strategic vision for achieving a reduction in occupational illness, injuries and fatalities through culture change, and for achieving improvement in transitional employment processes
- Provide a unified safety and health message to Montana workers and employers
- Provide resources for implementing / improving transitional employment processes
- Provide financial resources to carry out individual project initiatives

- Provide a 'branding' mechanism to create a cohesive, publicly-recognized safety 'trademark' for safety media used within the State of Montana
- Provide an effective mechanism to turn prevention strategies into actionable projects that reduce workplace illness, injuries and fatalities, thereby providing workers with a clean, healthy and safe work environment that improves business competitiveness, and
- Provide incentives to facilitate progress

Outcomes:

- 1) Formation of a WorkSafeMT Foundation Board
 - a. Public / private stakeholders
 - b. Collaborative working relationships
 - c. Focus on consensus building
 - d. Provide leadership and direction for changing the safety culture and transitional employment opportunities in Montana
 - e. Provide balance and support for employers, employees, and industry organizations
- 2) Develop WorkSafeMT Strategic Plan
 - a. Develop long-term, intermediate and short-term goals
 - b. Specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timeframes (SMART) objectives / initiatives
 - c. Employer, employee and organization input
- 3) Develop and disseminate resource database(s)
 - a. Associations
 - b. Information / education sources
 - c. Training sources
- 4) Develop and maintain WorkSafeMT website
 - a. Provide resources for employers and workers
 - b. Provide resources for safety and transitional employment
 - c. Develop and implement criteria for website and content
- 5) Develop THE BRAND
 - a. Develop logo, colors, look
 - b. Develop and implement criteria and process for 'co-branding'
- 6) Transitional Employment
 - a. 60 Summits: Montana report
 - i. Widely disseminate the report
 - ii. Recommend items for further action of Board and/or LMAC
 - iii. Assist participants in completion of action plans
 - iv. Provide training on preventing unnecessary injury related work absences
 - b. Develop & Disseminate trainings and / or tools for employers / employees / physicians on best practices for RTW
 - c. Develop or adopt model transitional employment programs for use by employers
- 7) Develop methods of measurement for progress and success
- 8) Develop process for future LMAC approval of decisions, projects, and initiatives